

Talbot County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
8:30 a.m.
215 Bay Street, Conference Room #1, Easton, MD 21601

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Judy Bixler, John Booth, Kelley Cox, Ian Fleming, Tracey Johns, Dolores Jones, Harold Klinger, Dennis McFadden, Cassandra Vanhooser

Board Members Absent: Angela Eade, Laura Price, Jeff Schneider, Al Silverstein, Kimberly Weller

Visitors: Paige Tilghman

Recording Secretary: Candace Harris

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the April meeting were presented. Harold Klinger moved that the minutes be accepted as written with necessary changes. Tracey Johns seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

III. Old Business

2016 Travel Guide: Ms. Vanhooser passed out the new 2016 Travel Guide to board members. She stated that she is very proud of how the guide turned out, and that there was a tremendous amount of work put into producing the guide. Of course there are a few mistakes, she noted, but she believes it will be a wonderful product for visitors. Approximately 25,000 copies of the guide will go in the mail on May 15, polybagged with the *Chesapeake Bay* Magazine. Ms. Vanhooser also reported that she is going to the Blogger Bash this week and plans to take copies of the guide with her. She said that ad revenue for the guide was in the \$43,000 range and all the revenue went to Chesapeake Bay Magazine.

National Travel & Tourism Week Mixer: Ms. Vanhooser thanked Mr. Fleming for hosting the National Travel Tourism Week Networking Event. She said that the weather cooperated wonderfully. The Board agreed that separating the mixer from the golf tournament is the correct thing to do. Four of our council members were able to attend and County Manager Andy Hollis also was able to attend. Representatives from the Star

Democrat, What's Up Magazine, and Johnny Mautz's assistant, Katie Moose, all attended the event. Ms. Vanhooser would like to set a date for next year. She recommended May 8, 2017, which is the Monday of National Travel and Tourism Week. Ms. Vanhooser will have Jessica Morris put the date on the county calendar.

Restaurant Week: Ms. Vanhooser distributed the final accounting for Restaurant Week 2016. Ms. Jones commented that the change of venue was great. Ms. Vanhooser stated that she has already spoken to the Tidewater Inn to save the date for April 2–8 for 2017.

IV. New Business

Tourism Budget 2017: Ms. Vanhooser explained to the Board that Talbot County is having budget issues which have been well documented in the paper. She explained that she was asked to submit a flat budget then cut it by 2%. The Board agreed that the group needs to lobby the Council all year and remind them that tourism generates revenue for the county.

Golf Tournament: Ms. Vanhooser stated that we need a volunteer for the Golf Tournament. Mr. Klinger volunteered to be on the committee. The golf tournament is scheduled to be held on October 11, 2016. The idea was discussed to have the Economic Development Department join in on the Tourism Golf Tournament to get more participation. Mrs. Tilghman stated that the Economic Development Department has bankers, real estate developers, and others she would ask to participate. Ms. Vanhooser stated that we have had about 40-50 players per year, but she does not see a way to grow it much more than that with just tourism-related players. The golf tournament has been a way for the Office of Tourism to make money. The Board recommended that Mrs. Tilghman discuss the idea with the Economic Development Board and get back to us.

Summer Schedule: The Tourism Board discussed suspending summer meetings for the months of June and July. Ms. Jones suggested meeting in August for a work session on MATPRA meeting. Also, because the MATPRA meeting will fall on the date of our Tourism meeting in September, Ms. Vanhooser suggested suspending the September meeting and resuming regularly scheduled meetings in October 2016. Ms. Cox made a motion to suspend the Tourism Board meetings in June, July and September, to meet in August, and to return to regularly scheduled meetings in October 2016. Mr. Klinger seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

MATPRA Update: Ms. Vanhooser reported that invitations to MATPRA have been issued to journalists. She is expecting 45-50 journalists and another 45-50 members to attend the conference. In addition to registration fees, Ms. Vanhooser is seeking approximately \$50,000 in sponsorship money. Other destinations have the first right of refusal, but local sponsors will be cultivated if we do not raise all of the money from MATPRA members. Ms. Vanhooser stated that she will be asking the Board members to serve as ambassadors and volunteers at some of the larger events. She will check with MATPRA executive committee to see what the rules are for local participation.

V. Town Reports

Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions.

VI. Comments

Ms. Paige Tilghman reported that Jack Day will be the speaker at the Economic Commission meeting in June. Tourism Board members are encouraged to attend.

VII. Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, August 9, 2016, at 8:30 am.

X. Adjournment

Mr. Klinger motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Johns seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:23 a.m.